

Daniel Winter House
Goodrich Vicinity
Sheridan County
North Dakota

HABS No. ND-18

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
DANIEL WINTER HOUSE

HABS NO. ND-18

Location: NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4, Section 10, Township 148N
Range 74W, Sheridan County, North Dakota

USGS Sheyenne Lake Quadrangle, UTM References not
available

Present Owner: Bureau of Reclamation,
U.S. Department of the Interior

Present Occupant: Vacant

Significance: The Daniel Winter House is an excellent example
of North Dakota rural settlement architecture from
the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It also
represents vernacular traditions associated with
German immigrants from Russia, who constituted one
of the state's most distinctive settlement groups.
The puddled-clay construction was one of several
methods of building with earth which these
immigrants adopted from Russian and Ukrainian
models, and subsequently employed in the
relatively treeless North Dakota environment.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of construction and builder.

Available evidence suggests that this house was constructed
between about 1900 and 1905 by Daniel Winter, a Russian-German
who came with his wife, Justina, and son, Nathaniel, to the U.S.
in 1893 or 1894 (Population Schedules, U.S. Census, McLean Co.
N.D., 1900; Sheridan Co., 1910). By February, 1901, Winter was
residing in Section 10-148-74, growing crops such as wheat,
oats, barley and flax (Mortgage dated 4 Feb. 1901, McLean Co.,
Book F, p. 426). In March, 1905, Winter received a patent for
his land, his claim having been properly "established and duly
consummated" (Homestead Certificate #7001, dated 30 March 1905,
Sheridan Co., Book 020, p. 456).

2. Original and subsequent owners.

The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on
which the Winter House stands. Reference is to the Recorder of
Deeds, Sheridan Co., North Dakota.

- 1905 Homestead certificate dated 30 March 1905, recorded in book 020, page 456, Sheridan County.
-United States of America to Daniel Winter.
- 1915 Warranty deed dated 31 March 1915, recorded in book D7, page 166, Sheridan County.
-Daniel and Justina Winter to (son) John Winter.
- 1946 Warranty deed (individual to joint tenants) dated 20 April 1946, recorded in book D26, page 294, Sheridan County.
-John Winter to (wife) Wilhelmina Winter (joint tenant).
- 1964 Final decree in the matter of the estate of Wilhelmina Winter, dated 18 August 1964, recorded in book D31, page 49, Sheridan County.
-Equal and undivided interest in Wilhelmina Winter's real property conveyed to (daughters) Melitha Winter, Bertha Mosal and Adena Roehl.
- 1964 Warranty deed dated 30 March 1964, recorded in book D-31, page 109, Sheridan County.
-Melitha Winter, Bertha & Robert Mosal, Adena & Julius Roehl to Albert Faul, Jr.
- 1983 Warranty deed dated 26 July 1983, recorded in book D44, page 482, Sheridan County.
-Albert and Hazel Faul, Jr. to U.S.A.

3. Alterations and additions.

Apart from extensive natural deterioration and probably some vandalism, the Winter House appears essentially unaltered from its original construction. It is very likely that the house was inhabited for only 10-15 years, as John Winter had his own residence nearby at the time he acquired this house from Daniel and Justina Winter in 1915. There is no evidence of addition or removal of rooms or wings, and the simplicity of the interior (even in its present condition) suggests that no attempt was ever made to remodel or otherwise improve on the original construction.

B. Historical Context

The Daniel Winter House is associated with two major themes in North Dakota's settlement history. It was constructed during the state's "second boom" of rural settlement, which began in the late 1890's and lasted to about World War I. The builder was a Russian-German immigrant, one of many members of this ethnic group who came to the central and northern plains, and the Dakotas in particular, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition, the contribution of Russian-Germans to the settlement architecture of North Dakota is gaining

recognition among scholars of American vernacular architecture (see for example Sherman 1974, Hudson 1975).

Euro-American settlement in North Dakota did not effectively begin until the 1870's, due in large measure to the area's location well north of established transportation routes west of the Mississippi (Robinson 1966:129). In 1873, however, the Northern Pacific Railroad reached Bismarck, followed by the Great Northern (to Minot) in 1887. Construction of these lines facilitated emigration more directly from the east; heretofore would-be settlers had come via Nebraska and South Dakota (Aberle 1963:150).

North Dakota's first large-scale settlement boom began about 1878 and lasted until around 1890, when the depression of the following decade brought it to an end. In the second boom, which began about 1898 as the nation's financial situation improved, transportation within the state was further expanded by construction of numerous branch lines off main railroad routes, and of the Soo Line, which served North Dakota by 1893. The notable population increases during this period prompted the subdivision of large counties into smaller political units. Among the counties so divided was McLean, in central North Dakota, from which Sheridan County was created in 1908 (Harvey 75th Jubilee Committee, North Dakota N.D.:439).

Dakota settlers, many of whom acquired farm land on the northern plains through the Homestead Act (1862), included a variety of nationalities, most from northern Europe. Among them were immigrants of German stock whose journey to the U.S. began not in Germany, but in Russia. Beginning in the early 18th century, agricultural families in southwestern Germany were lured to the Volga and Black Sea regions through generous provisions for land, the right to maintain their language and culture, and exemption from military duty. Czarist recruiting efforts occurred periodically into the 19th century, with the result that numerous colonies of Germans were established in southern Russia (see Sallett 1974).

In 1871, however, the government initiated a program of "Russianization" and conscription intended largely to bring the German colonists within the mainstream of Russian language and culture (Sallett 1974:14). In response many Germans left Russia, returning to Germany or emigrating to the United States. The first Russian-German colonies in the U.S., known as the Odessa Colonies, were founded in 1873 in Nebraska and South Dakota. Subsequently, Russian-Germans settled in many areas of the Central and Northern plains, including Wyoming, Colorado and North Dakota. They were active participants in North Dakota's "second boom", constituting a "considerable emigration" to areas around Harvey (northwestern Wells County, and eastern Sheridan County) at the turn of the century (Sallett 1974:37).

In North Dakota, the most common types of original rural domestic architecture were log cabins (at least while the scant supply of usable native timber lasted), and wood frame houses or shacks (erected often with lumber brought in, or even supplied by, the railroads) (Hudson 1975:6). Unlike Nebraska settlers for example, who employed sod construction to a significant extent, North Dakota homesteaders made little use of this readily-available material (ibid:9). The chief exceptions were Russian-Germans, many of whom, in following traditions evolved out of their experience in treeless lands of Russia and the Ukraine, utilized earth in a variety of ways in the construction of their first dwellings. The basic form was simple: single story, with rooms arranged in linear fashion beneath a side-gable roof, which could be enlarged either longitudinally or by addition of rooms at the rear. The walls (which were commonly finished with plaster or whitewash) might be built up with sod, with sun-dried clay bricks, with tamped or rammed earth, or with puddled clay poured into wooden forms that were raised in stages to the desired height (Sherman 1974:186-7, Sluss 1983:27). A double plate was sometimes used to tie the wooden roof framing more firmly to the walls, and a form of summer beam might also be employed to ensure structural stability (Sluss 1983:30-31). A variety of building elements could be purchased by those who could afford them. Among these were doors, window sash, and dimensioned lumber, shipped via the railroads in carload lots to many towns and installed in numerous sod and clay houses throughout the Great Plains region (Dick 1975:33-34). Houses so constructed, with their thick walls, were warm in winter, cool in summer, and if properly maintained could last many years. They constituted perhaps the most visible legacy of Russian-German emigration, derived from tradition, built with local materials, and finished with modest amenities made available through the railroads which were the primary agents of settlement on the Great Plains.

Among Russian-Germans who homesteaded during North Dakota's "second boom" was Daniel Winter, who came to the U.S. in 1893 or 1894, when he was about 48 years old. Both Winter and his wife, Justina, were born in Russia. They had 10 children, five of whom were alive in 1910, and at least two of whom (John and Nathaniel) came to North Dakota as well (Population Schedules, 1900 U.S. Census, McLean Co., N.D.).

Like many other Russian-Germans, Daniel Winter may have spent his first years in the U.S. in South Dakota (Aberle 1963:150). By 1901, however, he had filed a homestead claim for land near the Sheyenne River, in Fairview Township, Sheridan County, North Dakota (Aberle 1963:150). That year, Winter was recorded as owing \$54.30 to the First Bank of Harvey, which he was to pay off in wheat, oats, barley, and flax. The mortgage recorded in this matter listed an inventory of Winter's personal property,

which included a harness, a walking breaking plow, a stubble walking plow, a three-section, four-horse harrow, and one "light red cow" (Mortgage dated 4 Feb. 1901, Book F, p. 426, Sheridan County). The document also cited Winter as "residing" in section 10, and the nature of items in the inventory suggests the possibility that Winter had built at least one outbuilding or barn to shelter the machinery and cow.

Winter's claim to his Fairview Township acreage was proved up by early 1905, indicating that the five-year requirements of continuous residence and improvements had been met (Homestead Cert. #7001, Applic. #9701, dated 30 March 1905, Book 020, p. 456, Sheridan County), including, most likely, construction of the two-room house that still remains on the land. In 1915, when he was nearly 70, Winter sold his farm to his son John, who lived a short distance east in section 11 (Warranty Deed, 31 March 1915, Book 07, P. 166, Sheridan County; Harvey 75th Jubilee Committee, N.D.:441). Daniel and his wife may have left the farm then, perhaps moving to Harvey or another nearby town. The farm remained in the Winter family until 1964, but no evidence has been found (documentary or in the house itself) to indicate that the house was regularly inhabited once Daniel Winter died or moved away.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The Daniel Winter House is an excellent representative of North Dakota's late rural settlement architecture, and in particular of forms and use of materials associated with Russian-German emigration to the state. The simple side-gable form and poured-clay construction reflect a vernacular tradition which is combined with use of manufactured elements, such as dimensioned lumber, and ready-to-install window sash and doors.
2. Condition of the Fabric: Uninhabited for many years, the house is in an advanced state of deterioration. The mud walls have been extensively eroded by wind and rain, the roof shingles are badly rotted, and window sash and doors have been removed (although remains are scattered about the interior). The interior contains no furnishings, but remnants of faded paint provide evidence of original wall and ceiling colors.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Form: The Winter House is a one story, two room, side-gable structure rectangular in plan, with no additions. It is approx. 28 feet long, 18 feet deep, rising to 8 feet below the attic level, which is 15 feet at the roof ridge.

2. Foundation: The foundation consists of two irregular courses of multicolored uncut granitic fieldstone (glacial till found throughout the area), set on a low platform of tan sandstone flags. The mortar is of a soft clay-sand composition.
3. Walls: The walls are constructed of a fine clay mud with coarsely chopped straw as a binding agent. This material appears to have been poured in four courses, each between 12 to 15 inches high. Badly eroded on the exterior, the walls are approximately two feet thick, and appear to lack interior timber or stone reinforcement. On the south (main) facade a row of fieldstones is set near the top of the wall just below the plate, extending about two-thirds the length of the wall from the west end. Between the door and window on this facade there is also an irregular line of sandstone at approximately lintel level. Neither of these features serves a discernable structural purpose and they may have been intended as purely decorative elements. It is very probable that the walls were plastered or whitewashed on the exterior, but no evidence of this treatment is now visible.
4. Roof Framing and Covering: Dimensioned lumber is used to frame the single rafter roof. The evenly-spaced rafters are butt joined at the peak and project beyond the walls approximately 8". They are nailed to rafter plates (approx. 1 1/4" x 3") which rest on attic floor joists of approximately 1 5/8" x 5". The joists in turn are nailed to main wall plates (1 1/2" x 3 1/4") which are laid on top of the mud walls, with random pieces of wood inserted beneath, apparently to provide a more level surface. The plates extend about 8" beyond the planes of the east and west walls. The area between the two plates is filled with mud, which served to bind the plates and roof framing system to the walls. The attic floor consists of sawed planking, the edges narrowly lapped for a tight fit.

To stiffen the framing, short collar beams are nailed to each pair of rafters near the peak. For additional rigidity, a longitudinal beam is laid directly on the attic floor. It runs parallel to and directly below the roof ridge, extending from the west wall to a point about 2 feet short of the east end. Each attic joist is secured (through the flooring) to the beam by a wrought iron hook, which wraps around the lower edge of the joist and is bolted on the top of the beam.

The roof is covered with rotted wooden shingles fastened with wire nails to rough, irregularly-spaced planking, the latter laid on the rafters parallel to the roof ridge. The gable ends consist of studding nailed to end girts which rest on the ends of the main wall plates. The exterior of each gable end is sheathed with horizontal tongue-in-groove drop siding.

5. Openings: Single window openings are centered in the west and east walls. A window opening is also located toward the east end of the north wall. In the west half of the south wall is another window opening, with the single doorway approximately 5-6 feet to the east.

The window openings are approx. 2'-5" x 4' on the exterior, with level sills and lintels and splayed reveals. Each lintel consists of two short planks, approximately 1 1/2 feet wide, which extend beyond the outer edges of the opening and which are set on short lengths of wood inserted perpendicular to the wall plane. Each sill is similarly formed, the planks held together by strips nailed on their lower faces. The soffits of the lintels of the west and south windows appear to have been covered with paper bearing a simple foliate motif. The reveals of all windows were coated first with a fine clay-straw mixture, and then with a thin layer of sandy cement which was painted or whitewashed. Remains of a window frame indicate that the windows were filled with 2/2 wooden double hung sash in flat surrounds. They were set into the outer wall face, with the inner edges abutting the edges of the built-up reveals.

The low doorway features a plank lintel, similar to those of the window openings, supported on each end by small sandstone flags inserted into the wall. Beneath the lintel is a grid of narrow lath, the underside of which was plastered with the same clay-straw material as the walls, coated with a layer of sandy cement plaster, and then painted or whitewashed. The unsplayed reveals of the doorway are similarly treated, suggesting that at one time the entire exterior (at least to the top of the mud walls) was also plastered and painted. The dimensioned-lumber door frame and plank sill are fully recessed, with no exterior architrave. The door (now consisting only of the hanging stile) is hung on flat butt hinges with small finials at either end of the pins. From remains now lying on the floor inside, the door appears to have had four vertical panels (the upper two longer than the bottom two), the edges of which were tongued to fit the grooved edges of the stiles and rails. The door was also fitted with a square metal box lock, the knob of which has been removed.

At the attic level, the west end features a single 2/2 wooden fixed sash window, centered near the gable peak. On the east end is a narrow vertical plank door hung between two studs on narrow triangular butt hinges. It is fastened with a simple metal hook-and-eye catch.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plan: The Winter House contains two rooms. The smaller of the two is the kitchen (or Kuche), which occupies slightly less than half of the available floor space and is

located on the east end. The larger living-sleeping room (Vorstube) is located on the west end. As the entrance opens only into the kitchen, access to the living room is through a door in the single interior partition wall. This wall is constructed of evenly-spaced studding, with narrow lath nailed to both sides.

2. Wall, Floor and Ceiling Finish: All interior wall surfaces were coated with a layer of clay-straw mud, a thinner layer of sandy cement plaster, then whitewashed and painted what appears to have been a light blue, now faded to a gray-blue. Both rooms appear to have had earthen floors. The ceilings, however, were finished with narrow beaded boarding painted bright blue. Quarter-round molding strips, painted dark or forest green, edged the ceilings in both rooms. In the center of each ceiling, a six-pointed figure, set within a circle, was scribed with a nail or other sharp instrument. The figure and the outer edge of the circle were painted dark green, the remainder bright red.
3. Doorways and Doors: Access between rooms is through a doorway at the south end of the partition wall. The "frame" is simply wall studding, on the west side of which was hung a four-panel door. This door (the remnants of which are extant) is similar to the exterior door, but the butt hinges feature raised foliate designs and the metal box lock is slightly more decorative. Both doorways are framed with architraves fashioned from mitered strips of beaded board similar to that used on the ceilings, and appear to have been painted the same color as well.
4. Chimney: On the east (kitchen) side of the partition wall, a square stove chimney rises from wooden brackets nailed to and cantilevered out from the wall studding. Below the ceiling, the chimney is constructed of manufactured tan bricks laid in a sand-cement mortar. Red brick, which features a molded recessed "panel" on one side, is used for the remainder of the stack, which no longer pierces the roof. In the kitchen, the chimney was originally covered with clay plaster, a sandy cement layer, and then painted to match the walls. There appear to have been two stovepipe openings (one on each side of the chimney) on the kitchen side, formed by molding clay into the corners of rectangular openings. A third on the living room side was similarly shaped with clay.
5. Hardware: Apart from door hinges and locks noted above, the only items of hardware are small holders for curtain rods nailed to the interior walls at the west and east windows.
6. Heating, Plumbing, Lighting: From the existence of the chimney, it can be assumed that heat was supplied by a stove or stoves. There is no evidence of interior plumbing nor lighting

fixtures of any kind.

7. Access to the attic appears to have been from the exterior on the east end. No evidence of a ladder or stairway, however, remains. Several rectangular openings have been cut into the ceilings in both rooms, but none are large enough to permit passage of anyone but a very small child.

D. Site

1. General Setting: The Winter House is located in a small, overgrown clearing surrounded by fields of sunflowers. It faces roughly south, and is sheltered on the north and west by low cottonwoods and scrub bushes. A long windrow, running northwest-southeast, passes by the front. The house is accessible only from a lane that extends from a gravel road between sunflower and hay fields. The Sheyenne River, which here is mostly a marshy creek, is located about one-quarter mile to the north. The nearest residence is about one-half mile to the east.
2. Outbuildings: No evidence of outbuildings remains at the house site.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Aberle, George P. From the Steppes to the Prairies. Bismarck: Tribune Co., 1963.

Deed Records, McLean County Courthouse, Washburn, North Dakota.

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Dick, Everett Conquering The Great American Desert: Nebraska Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1975.

Harvey 75th Jubilee Committee. Growing with Pride: The Harvey, N.D. Area. Harvey: 75th Jubilee Committee, n.d.

Hudson, John, "Frontier Housing In North Dakota," North Dakota History 42:4(1975), pp. 4-15.

Robinson, Elwin B. History of North Dakota. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

Sallet, Richard. Russian-German Settlements in the United States. Fargo: North Dakota Institute For Regional Studies, 1974.

Schweigert, Kurt. National Register Nomination Form for Daniel Winter House, 28 June 1979.

Sheridan County Heritage '76. McClusky, N.D.: The McClusky Gazette, 1976.

Sherman, William C., "Prairie Architecture of the Russian-German Settlers," in Richard Sallet, Russian-German Settlements in the United States. Fargo: North Dakota Institute For Regional Studies, 1974.

Sluss, Jacqueline. Icons on the Prairie. MS., 18 August 1983 (on file in North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Bismarck).

United States Census, Population Schedules, McLean County, N.D., 1900; Sheridan County, N.D., 1910.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Daniel Winter House was recorded in September, 1983, by Dennett, Muessig, Ryan & Associates, Ltd. (Iowa City, Iowa) for Ethnoscience, (Billings, Montana) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bismarck, North Dakota). The project team consisted of Hans Muessig, Project Director, Photographer and Photogrammetrist; Angela J. Schiller, Field Assistant; and Martha H. Bowers, Historian/Architectural Historian. Measured drawings were produced by Angela J. Schiller, stereoplotter operator and Bruce A. Harms, stereoplotter operator, and delineated by Marie Neubauer and Angela Schiller.